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Your Reference: HL74402/001/ASG/LS
Application No: GB 0308296.3

2 June 2003

Dear Sirs

Patents Act 1977:
Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 and 18(3)

Latest date for reply: 14 July 2003

I enclose two copies of my search and examination report and a copy of the citations.

By the above date you should either file amendments to meet the objections in the report or make observations on them. If you do not, the application may be refused.

You should also note that the normal, unextended period allowed for complying fully with the requirements of the Act will end on 4th September 2003. However, if you need extra time to settle any remaining objections you are entitled to extend that period by one month by filing Patents Form 52/77 and fee.

Please clearly mark all future correspondence as urgent.

Publication

I estimate that, provided you have met all formal requirements, preparations for publication of your application will be completed soon after 1 July 2003. You will then receive a letter informing you of completion and telling you the publication number and date of publication.

Amendment/withdrawal

*Use of E-mail: Please note that e-mail should be used for correspondence only.



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If you wish to file amended claims for inclusion with the published application, or to withdraw the application to prevent publication, you must do so before the preparations for publication are completed. No reminder will be issued. If you write to the Office less than 3 weeks before the above completion date, please mark your letter prominently: **"URGENT - PUBLICATION IMMINENT"**.

Yours faithfully

L. A. Ellis

Dr. Lyndon Ellis
Examiner



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Application No: GB 0308296.3
Claims searched: 1-8

Examiner: Dr. Lyndon Ellis
Date of search: 1 June 2003

Patents Act 1977 : Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance	
X, E	1-8	GB 2347950 A	(Shell) Whole document
X, E	1-8	GB 2344606 A	(Shell) Whole document

Categories:

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent documents published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO, & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^v:

E1F

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC⁷:

E21B

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report:

Online: EPODOC, WPI, JAPIO



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Patents Act 1977

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Allowance of the divisional date

1. Your request that this application be treated as having been filed on 23 February 2000, which is the same date of filing as your earlier application number GB0004282.0, has been allowed.

Basis of the examination

2. My examination has taken account of the amendments filed with your agent's letter of 8 May 2003.

Novelty

3. The invention as defined in claims 1-8 is not new because it has already been disclosed in the following documents:

GB 2347950 A (Shell)*
GB 2344606 A (Shell)*

4. No amendment of your claims will be needed in respect of the document marked * if you can show that the priority date of your invention is not later than the priority date of the relevant disclosure in that document.

5. Both documents show wellbore casings having thick and thin walled sections and where a compressible annular member (seal) is coupled to the thin wall sections, thus anticipating the indicated claims.

Clarity and consistency

6. In claim 3, it is stated that the thickness of the thin wall section may range up to 100% of the thick wall section which casts doubt on whether the different wall sections can be described in relative terms as thick and thin. Depending on the amendment made, consequential amendments may also have to be made to the description for consistency.

7. Claims 5 and 6 cast doubt on the essential features of claim 1. In claim 1 it is essential that compressible member is coupled to the thin wall section, whereas it is described as a possible configuration in claim 5 and in claim 6 it may be connected to both the thin and thick wall sections.



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[Examination Report contd.]

8. The statements of invention following "Summary of the Invention" should be brought into agreement with the claims. Particular consideration should be given to phrases which describe embodiments or aspects of the invention, which do not relate to the invention as claimed.

9. Pages 10-12 require amendment to make them consistent with the claims.

10. Throughout the description, amendment is required to phrases which describe embodiments, aspects, methods or apparatus of the invention, which do not relate to the invention as claimed. The amendments should make it clear which part of the description actually relates to the invention being claimed.

11. On page 1, lines 2 and 3, the invention as presently claimed in claim 1 does not relate to a wellbore casing formed using expandible tubing.

12. The final sentence on page 238 is of indeterminate scope and should be deleted.

Non-metric units

13. Throughout the application, the equivalent metric values should be given alongside the non-metric values. Alternatively you may wish to include an additional page showing the equivalent metric values, rather than making amendments throughout the description, however metric values should be provided alongside the non-metric values in the claims.

Registered Trade Marks

14. Although they should preferably be avoided, if you wish to keep the references to the Registered Trade Marks "Super Seal, Halliburton, Lubriplate, Cameron, Breda, Teflon, Petrolin" you should acknowledge that they are Registered Trade Marks, possibly by using the abbreviation "(RTM)". If you do not insert an acknowledgment, I will do so in manuscript. You may, if you wish, include an additional page acknowledging said Trade Marks which would negate the need to acknowledge the Trade Marks individually throughout the description.

Publication

15. The application is being published concurrently.